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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 005420

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [CY](#) [GR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY APPARENTLY NOT YET DECIDED ON CANCELING
CYPRUS MILITARY EXERCISES, WILL OFFER ADDITIONAL CBM'S TO
GREECE

REF: A. STATE 163708

[B](#). ANKARA 4966

[C](#). ANKARA 1103

Classified By: Acting DCM Timothy A. Betts for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The Turkish MFA and TGS will discuss the cancellation of military exercises on Sept. 19. MFA is inclined to cancel (if Greece does); the TGS J5 Greece/Cyprus Branch Chief told us he will recommend the decision be linked to whether EU accession negotiations commence Oct. 3. We believe MFA's view will prevail. Turkey plans to offer bilateral CBMs to the Greeks in advance of the Greek land forces commander's Nov. 5 visit to Ankara. End summary.

MFA: We Will Likely Cancel Cyprus Exercises...

[1](#)2. (C) Charge delivered ref a demarche Sept. 7 to MFA Undersecretary Tuygan, who acknowledged the points but did not respond substantively. Deputy PolCouns followed up Sept. 16 with Levent Bilman, MFA Deputy Director General for Northeastern Mediterranean Affairs. Bilman reported that the MFA will discuss the issue with the "relevant authorities" (the military) on Sept. 19. He added that "our intention" (MFA's) is to follow the same approach as last year (simultaneous Greek/Turkish cancellation of autumn exercises in Cyprus), but he could not make any guarantees prior to the Sept. 19 meeting.

...But TGS Is Still Thinking About It

[1](#)3. (C) On Sept. 14, PolMilCouns called on TGS J5 Greece/Cyprus Branch Chief RADM Mucahit Sislioglu to discuss the issue. Sislioglu said that he planned to recommend to his superiors that the decision on carrying out exercises in Cyprus should be linked to whether EU accession negotiations proceed on Oct. 3. Sislioglu asserted that he was "85-90 percent certain" that the negotiations would proceed, and therefore Turkey would not carry out the exercises. If, however, negotiations are derailed, he warned that he would recommend proceeding "for sure" with exercises. He noted that it was also possible that the GOT may decide to cancel the "Toros" exercise before Oct. 3, but if accession talks are called off Turkey may carry out an exercise by another name. PolMilCouns pointed out that it may not be Greece or Cyprus who would block negotiations; Sislioglu countered that he would still recommend proceeding with exercises in such circumstances.

[1](#)4. (C) Sislioglu (please protect) emphasized that he was only providing us what will be his own recommendation to his superiors in TGS, and that he did not know what MFA's position would be.

[1](#)5. COMMENT: If EU accession negotiations proceed on Oct. 3, we believe Turkey will not carry out large-scale exercises in Cyprus. However, if there is a negative outcome on Oct. 3, Turkey will reconsider a number of policies, including military exercises. END COMMENT.

TGS: We Will Offer More CBMs to the Greeks...Again

[1](#)6. (C) Sislioglu mentioned that during a trip to Greece in February (ref c), he had offered the Greek military specific confidence-building measures, including port visits, joint exercises, and personnel exchanges at each others' bases. Sislioglu said these were similar to previous offers TGS has made in the past. He said the Greek military only replied that it was seeking political direction from the Greek MFA, and never provided a final response.

[1](#)7. (C) Sislioglu reported that the Greek land forces commander was to visit Ankara Nov. 5, and that TGS had prepared a similar list of CBMs for this visit, focused on army-to-army contacts. However, this time the Turkish MFA will make the offer directly to the Greek MFA first. Provided the Greek MFA approves the offer, TGS will then "push the button" on the military side.

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